

## Field Trip Descriptions

### FLEPPC/SE-EPPC 2013 Annual Conference

**Field Trips:** Please choose one field trip. All field trips cost \$25 and include a boxed lunch. Estimated time frame for all trips is noon to 5:00 PM, Wednesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>. We will carpool from the hotel for all trips. Restrooms are available at all sites.

**Recommended for all trips:**

water	hat	long pants
sunscreen	boots or field shoes	binoculars
insect repellent	long-sleeved shirt	camera

**Note:** Field trip #2 will include a 45-minute demonstration on backpack and spot treatment calibration. Attendees will learn straightforward field methods to rapidly determine the effective per acre rate when doing spot and broadcast treatments in natural areas.

1. **Point Washington State Forest** is located in the southernmost portion of Walton County. The forest is approximately 9 miles south of Freeport on U.S. Highway 98 (driving time: 35 minutes). The forest is comprised of several natural communities that have very unique characteristics. The majority of the area consists of sandhills, basin swamps/Titi drains, wet flatwoods, wet prairie and cypress swamps.

Several plants and animals listed as threatened, endangered or species of special concern exist at Point Washington State Forest. Some of these rare species include American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), gopher tortoise, flatwoods salamander, white-topped pitcher plant (*Sarracenia leucophylla*) and the world's largest population of Curtiss' sandgrass (*Calamovilfa curtissii*).

Some consider titi to be a "native invasive" species when it comes to land management issues. A biomass timber sale was initiated to help alleviate titi encroachment problems in various areas. A large population of cogon grass exists in a relatively unmanaged area along the spoil bank of the Intracoastal Waterway. Treatments have had little success.

2. **Topsail Hill Preserve State Park** is a 1600 acre coastal preserve located in Walton County between Destin and Panama City (driving time: 40 minutes). It has the largest stretch of unbroken coastal scrub and dune habitat in the area. This makes it an ideal habitat for the endangered Choctawhatchee Beach Mouse as well as nesting shorebirds. The preserve also has a nice mixture of forested habitats, pine flatwoods, wet prairies, cypress dome swamps, scrub, and two globally imperiled coastal dune lakes. South Walton County has 15 of these unique lakes and Topsail is the only place where the lakes are wholly surrounded by conservation land. Miles of hiking trails afford park visitors the opportunity to pass through and experience all of the natural communities in the park and provide wonderful viewing opportunities of the dune field and lakes.

The largest exotics problem occurs in the campground which was privately held until 1998. The previous owners landscaped with a variety of non-native species. Our trip will commence with a tour of the campground. Our next biggest challenge is torpedo grass, and there are two areas in particular that are of greatest concern. We will visit these sites and discuss management challenges. We will also visit two areas where tallow and cogon grass are present but not in

large numbers or areas. This will give participants a good overview of the park, its communities, and our ongoing exotic plant control program.

In addition, the **FLEPPC Control & Evaluation Committee** will provide a 45-minute demonstration on backpack and spot treatment calibration. Attendees will learn straightforward field methods to rapidly determine the effective per acre rate when doing spot and broadcast treatments in natural areas. This important but often neglected step is critical to ensure the labeled maximum rate per acre is not exceeded. The trip should last 2 to 3 hours depending on discussions.

**3. Ponce de Leon Springs State Park:** Perhaps the “fountain of youth” associated with Ponce de Leon is the springs found in this 443-acre park located in Holmes and Walton counties (driving time: 50 minutes). The main spring in the park produces more than 14 million gallons of water daily with a constant temperature of 68 degrees. The park property was acquired in 1970 but has been used for social gatherings of all sorts since the mid-1920s. The terrain is mostly upland pine, mixed hardwoods, flood plain forest, and swamp which follow the basic patterns of Sandy Creek, Mill Creek and Blue Creek.

The property has several exotic invasive plants such as Japanese climbing fern, Chinese tallow, Chinese privet, kudzu, cogon grass and crotalaria. The field trip will discuss different methods used to treat these species, effects of treatments, and efforts to refine the accuracy and delineation of natural plant communities.

**4. Tyndall Air Force Base** is a 30,000 acre peninsula just south of Panama City (driving time: 20 minutes). Tyndall AFB has 18 miles of undeveloped gulf beach barrier islands and hundreds of miles of shoreline along numerous bays and bayous. Native Florida habitats include mesic slash pine flatwoods, scrub, hardwood and maritime hammocks, longleaf pine restoration forests and abundant wetlands. The primary mission at Tyndall AFB is to train and operate F-22 fighter jets. However, the Air Force is a good steward of the land and their Natural Resources Branch conducts restoration of native habitats and protection for 50 threatened and endangered plants and animals, such as gopher tortoise, sea turtles, and shorebirds.

Invasive species are found on the installation, and an active identification and control program is in place. Exotic plants include cogon grass, Japanese climbing fern, air potato, Chinese tallow, mimosa, camphor, and Chinaberry trees. The field trip will visit several infested areas, particularly those with military mission impacts and highlight treatment programs and partnerships to combat exotics.